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UNCLAS YEREVAN 002787

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CACEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES GOAM NON-COMBAT  
CONTINGENT TO IRAQ

REF: YEREVAN 2166

(U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

1. (SBU) On December 24, the Armenian National Assembly voted to authorize sending a non-combat contingent to Iraq. This clears the way for deployment of the approximately 50-man GOAM contingent of drivers, sappers, and medics to Iraq in early to mid-January. The resolution ratifies an agreement signed by President Kocharian on September 6, committing Armenian personnel to work with the Polish contingent already in Iraq (reftel). Opposition parties who boycotted the National Assembly during most of 2004 returned and largely voted against the deployment. Most of the pro-government coalition (with the exception of the Dashnaks) and non-aligned members, however, voted for the resolution, and it easily cleared the National Assembly by a vote of 91 for to 23 against, with one abstention.

2. (SBU) The National Assembly did not reveal details of the eight-hour debate, but sources told us that the Defense Minister Serzh Sargsian took the floor four times to urge passage of the resolution. After the vote, Sargsian told the press that sending Armenians to Iraq is necessary for national security, implying that the favor of the West is crucial to that security.

3. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
EVANS